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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: DPRK EUROPE IRAN LEGANON RUSSIA G-8 CENTRAL
ASIA;BERLIN

- A. Lead Stories Summary
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- C. (Europe) Renditions
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H. (Central Asia) Azerbaijan President Visits Berlin

A. Lead Stories Summary HEADLINES

Daimler Soon Without Chrysler? - Zetsche Looking For Partners
(Frankfurter Allgemeine)

Daimler Considering Separating From Chrysler (Sueddeutsche Zeitung)

Daimler Examining Separation From Chrysler (Die Welt)

Young Germans Live More Dangerously (Frankfurter Rundschau)

No Time For Children In Germany (Tagesspiegel)

Deep Crack In Daimler's World Inc. (Berliner Zeitung)

Editorials focused on the debate over whether Daimler should sell Chrysler and a UNICEF study on the well-being of children. ZDF-TV's early evening newscast heute opened with report on new restrictions for novice drivers, and ARD-TV's early evening newscast Tagesschau opened with a story on a possible break-up of Daimler - Chrysler.

B. (DPRK) Six-Party Talks

1. "Tit-For-Tat Trade"

Georg Blume opined in center-left, weekly Die Zeit of Hamburg (2/15):

"This was a run-of-the mill trade-off that the conservatives in the United States wanted to prevent at all costs because a superpower such as the United States does not negotiate about nuclear bombs but bans the weakest from possessing them and, if necessary, takes them away from such countries. That is why hardliners such as Jon Bolton are now going nuts. But it was George W. Bush who approved the deal...which looked like a pragmatic deal designed in Asia. But will a dictator such as Kim really give away bombs for money? John Bolton has not yet been refuted."

2. "Encouraging"

J|rgen Schultz commented in right-of-center Ostsee-Zeitung of Rostock (2/14)

"It remains to be seen whether Pyongyang will stick to the agreement. Already under President Bill Clinton, the United States

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supplied North Korea with wheat and oil. At the end, Kim's empire continued its nuclear policy. However, the recent change of mind did not happen over night. The six-party talks lasted for three years, in which North Korea stopped the dialogue and threatened the world with martial gestures, ranging from missile to nuclear tests. North Korea has lost the game of nuclear poker. It has continuously isolated itself, and is overstretched militarily, economically, and socially. Millions of North Koreans have starved to death in recent years. The diplomatic victory over Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions, bought also by one million tons of oil, is encouraging. But it cannot be copied onto the mullah regime in Teheran. Iran, which is rich in oil, is going to become a regional power with the help of the nuclear bomb. Washington's 'axis of evil' is wobbly but it has

not broken down."

C. (Europe) Renditions

1. "State Secret"

Florian Schenck had this to say in an editorial center-left, weekly Die Zeit of Hamburg (2/15):

"Egypt released Islamist Abu Omar on Monday and possibly some German intelligence officials have become nervous after the news became known.... Was it really possible for the CIA to organize kidnappings without the knowledge of national intelligence agencies?

Italian justice authorities think that it was not possible and have opened an investigation against Italy's intelligence chief Nicolo Pollari. And Abu Omar wants to reveal more information soon. Germany continues to argue about its involvement in the Abu Omar case and in the case of Khaled el-Masri. But according to el-Masri, his kidnappers had police information from Germany. How far did German cooperation in the fight against terror go? Italian files could offer some information but an important part of it was promptly classified as a state secret."

D. (Iran) Bomb Attack

1. "Terror In Tehran's Backyard"

Rudolph Chimelli judged in an editorial in center-left Sueddeutsche Zeitung of Munich (2/15):

"Such an organized bombing like the one that took the lives of more than a dozen revolutionary guards is not an everyday event in the region. It is not unique, since a convoy of government vehicles was

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attacked in March of last year.... But the most recent attack would get a new quality if it not turned out to be a 'home-made' attack. U.S. investigative journalist Seymour Hersh wrote in the New Yorker in 2006 that the Bush administration is trying to establish contacts with minorities in Iran to destabilize the regime and prepare possible military action. Other sources indicate that the Pentagon and the CIA are using to help infiltrate Iran.... After the most recent bombing, unofficial sources in Tehran suspected foreign masterminds behind the attack, but no official source backs this accusation. But since Washington is also accusing Tehran of stirring up anti-American attacks in Iraq, such an accusation would be tantamount to an escalation...."

E. (Lebanon) Anniversary Of Hariri Assassination

1. "Lebanon Close To Disaster"

Business daily FT Deutschland of Hamburg (2/15) editorialized:

"Lebanon is facing a civil war, but there are still reasons to hope that a catastrophe could be avoided. That Beirut remained peaceful yesterday when tens of thousands of government supporters took to the streets near the Hezbollah tent city is very encouraging. A day earlier unknown people tried to change the mood by a bloody attack.... Recent assassinations of ministers and gun battles in the streets have made the situation worse. Similar things could have easily happened yesterday.... But both sides apparently fear a great clash. However, the bomb that exploded the day before yesterday shows that there are a number of provocateurs in Beirut."

F. (Russia) Reaction To Putin Speech

1. "No Way! No Cold War"

Josef Joffe judged in a front-page editorial in center-left, weekly Die Zeit of Hamburg (2/15):

"Of course, [following Vladimir Putin's speech in Munich] people think about a revival of the Cold War, but what we do not see is the lack of messianic ideologies that intensified the power struggle between 1945 and 1985. There has not been the deployment of millions of soldiers either...but Putin's attack against America revealed a change of paradigms that did not remind us of the years after 1945 but of the 19th century. One motif was: 'We are somebody again;' 'We feel encircled,' was another...."

"But a bit of a responsibility was shining through Putin's speech. He reminded us that Russia has offered Iran an international

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enrichment center, and he lauded cooperation with the 'American neighbor' in the non-proliferation policy. But Putin cannot be fully satisfied with his Munich diatribe, and this is as reassuring as was the mild American reaction. There are enough common interests and, fortunately, no hard strategic conflicts. Unlike in the Cold War, the West is arguing not whether but how it should cooperate with Moscow. The West will emphasize the seriousness of its policies by offering fair conditions for such cooperation instead of demonstrating a total understanding of Moscow. Nevertheless, for the 44th security conference in Munich we hope for a wiser Putin."

G. (Global Economy) Germany's G8 Presidency

1. "Merkel's Tired Men"

Peter Ehrlich opined in business daily FT Deutschland of Hamburg (2/15):

"Chancellor Merkel is the most powerful women in the world this year. As the president of the EU Council and the chairwomen of the G8 countries, she can define the agenda in Europe and among the world's most powerful politicians. Unfortunately, it looks like Merkel might be paralyzed the end of this year. Not Merkel herself but the men she is with are to blame. Let's start with the man from Merkel's smallest cabinet of horrors, who shouted loudly last weekend: Vladimir Putin. Not everything the Russian president said at the Munich Security Conference was wrong. He has the right to pursue his country's security interests. But Putin's new aspiration to become a superpower again has more to do with feelings than with real interests.... The world of the other global player, George W. Bush, is also not very hopeful. Since the beginning of his first administration, the U.S. president believed in patterns of good and evil that ignored the complicated situation in the Arab world and the problems of global warming. Instead of uniting the United States after September 11, 2001, he divided the world.... Merkel needs partners who are not just talking about mankind's problems and their solutions, but who are ready to take risks and bite the bullet. However, the world's leading politicians will only leave unresolved problems behind."

H. (Central Asia) Azerbaijan President Visits Berlin

1. "Trump Card Oil"

Frank Herold remarked in left-of-center Berliner Zeitung (2/15):

"Still rivaling with Moscow, Americans were the only ones who

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devoted attention to the country of Azerbaijan in the 1990s. In times of an increasing shortage of natural resources and growing uncertainties over Russia's future energy policy, Europe is becoming more interested in Central Asia. Two weeks ago, the Kazakh

president was in Berlin, his Azerbaijan counterpart is arrives soon.

This frequency of visits is not a coincidence. Apart from many other topics, Germany plans to formulate a European strategy for the Caucasus and Central Asia.... The race for accessing the natural resources has begun. Russia, China, and the United States are actively engaged. Europe is coming a little late. For Europeans, the future alliance with Russia has a priority. This makes the policy toward Central Asia and the Caucasus a balancing act.

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